

Genital Herpes

Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease caused by the herpes virus type II. Herpes virus type I can result in “cold sores” or “fever blisters” on the mouth, but can also cause lesions in the genital area. Genital Herpes can be spread from mother to child at the time of delivery.

Symptoms

- Small grouped blisters (clusters) on the genitalia that are often painful. This is referred to as an “outbreak”.
- Fever and flu-like symptoms (only with the first outbreak).
- Many people have no symptoms; however they can still spread the virus to their sexual partners (known as asymptomatic shedding).
- Symptoms usually appear two days to three weeks after infection.
- Lesions will go away within 1-3 weeks regardless of treatment.
- Herpes is a virus that cannot be cured or eliminated from the body.

If you think you have Genital Herpes stop having sex and come to the DC Health and Wellness Center for a **CONFIDENTIAL** Assessment. *Free for DC Residents without insurance.*

Testing

- A blood test can determine if you have herpes type II.

Treatment

- The most commonly used medication is Acyclovir (Zovirax).
- Famciclovir (Famvir) or Valacyclovir (Valtrex) are other medications that can be used.
- Treatment is given during an outbreak to shorten the duration of the outbreak. However, it is not curative and future outbreaks are common.

Prevention Tips

- Avoid unprotected sex.
- Always use a condom. However, condoms do not totally prevent the transmission of herpes.
- Have only one sex partner.